

CASE STUDY

How London Heliport used GuardianUTM Approval Services to improve safety and increase efficiency



Summary

Altitude Angel and London Heliport case study

***London Heliport* was facing a growing number of drone flight requests. And it was causing problems.**

London Heliport's Flight-Restriction Zone (FRZ) encompasses a number of locations: Clapham Common, Battersea Park, Stamford Bridge stadium, HMP Wandsworth, and many more. Unsurprisingly, hundreds of drone operators apply to fly within London Heliport's FRZ, with the numbers increasing each year.

Each application requires its own risk assessment to ensure the safety of the heliport's staff and passengers, not to mention the time and resources spent handling each request.

London Heliport needed a way to streamline the approvals process while maintaining strict operational safety.

Which is why London Heliport now works with Altitude Angel.



London's only CAA-licensed heliport

Sitting opposite Chelsea Harbour for over 50 years, London Heliport is the only CAA-licensed heliport serving the City of London. Providing a huge suite of luxury services to both VIPs and the business community, including private charters and airport transfers, it also serves as a departure and arrival point for events both in and around the City.

The heliport also provides local emergency services such as the London Air Ambulance with the facilities they need, helping them keep people safe and save lives.

With so much traffic coming in and out of the Heliport, safety is an absolute priority. Unauthorised drone flights can pose a huge risk to pilots and passengers, which is why the team is keen to work with and accommodate drone operators as much as possible. But the sheer number of flight applications was starting to make that difficult.



Image courtesy of London Heliport:
London Heliport base in the City of London



Struggling under administrative burden

Unfortunately, the growing number of drone flight applications submitted to the heliport was causing a strain on resources.

“Our main role is providing a VIP service to helicopters and passengers here. The guys at the front desk were trying to support passengers but having to spend loads of time dealing with drone flight applications.”

Matthew Rice, Heliport Manager at London Heliport

The source of the issues lay in the application process. Drone operators would contact the heliport and be sent an application form. The team would process the application, diligently checking it against other planned operations and assessing the risk. Where the application was found to be incomplete, the team would need to spend extra time seeking missing information from the drone operator.

If the team’s risk assessment determined the application was safe to approve, they would do so and manually process the administration fee by credit card machine or by verifying a wire transfer.

“It was long-winded and used up a lot of your time. One application could take you about half an hour.”

Matthew Rice, Heliport Manager at London Heliport

Processing up to 800 applications a year meant London Heliport was investing resources into 400 hours (and rising) of drone flight approvals.

Once a flight was approved, it was manually added to a central spreadsheet. Unfortunately, this didn’t give the team the visibility it needed.



UAV flying in the sky

“The biggest problem with the spreadsheet was it was huge. Last time I looked, there were over 700 permits. And flights weren’t listed individually. Permits were issued with date ranges. A line on the spreadsheet saying a pilot has a permit for a year doesn’t tell me what’s happening today.”

Matthew Rice, Heliport Manager at London Heliport

This meant that the Heliport’s audit trail needed a degree of interpretation to demonstrate operational safety, as well as relying on records of calls with individual drone operators on the day.

What they needed was a platform that would make the application process simple, straightforward, and efficient.

A platform like GuardianUTM Approval Services.

Easier, quicker, safer

Implementing GuardianUTM’s Approval Services took the burden away from London Heliport’s resources while maintaining operational safety.

Drone operators simply use one of Altitude Angel’s free drone planning tools to submit a flight request to operate in London Heliport’s FRZ. The platform consolidates all flight and operator information, saving the team time on verifying all the necessary information. Administration fees can even be automatically processed upon approval.

From half an hour per application, London Heliport saw dramatic time savings.

“Getting the approval service on GuardianUTM changed the game completely. Straightforward applications take significantly less time. Even ones with issues are much easier and faster. It has shaved off so much time.”

Matthew Rice, Heliport Manager at London Heliport



More importantly, these time savings don't come at the price of safety. In fact, GuardianUTM makes it easier to conduct thorough risk assessments by bringing all the necessary data together in one place and the reduction in time has enabled us to keep our administrative fees from rising as demand increases.

The London Heliport team can see ground and air data from within London Heliport's FRZ, as well as providing situational awareness of activity outside the FRZ, in a single view. Making it not just quicker and easier to conduct risk assessments, but ensuring such assessments are more comprehensive than ever.

"The situational awareness map is incredible. What you can see on there, and all the extra information is brilliant. This was one of the big selling points for us. It all shows up on the system. It gives us a picture of what's going on."

Matthew Rice, Heliport Manager at London Heliport



Altitude Angel's platform being used at London Heliport



Continuing to make things better

Working with London Heliport has been an absolute pleasure, and we're thrilled to see how much our GuardianUTM platform has helped them. And this is just the beginning.

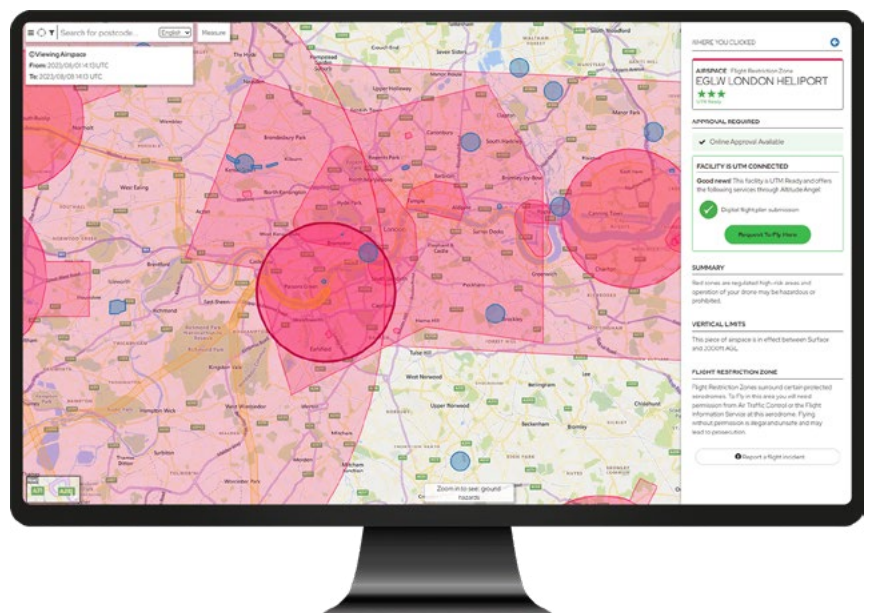
"Altitude Angel's service has been brilliant. And they're working with us to constantly improve the system."

Matthew Rice, Heliport Manager at London Heliport

All the while, we continue to provide London Heliport, and the drone operators flying within its FRZ, with any help they need to make the application process as straightforward as possible.

"The Altitude Angel team is brilliant. I know if anyone needs guidance, we can pass them on to the team to get the help they need."

Matthew Rice, Heliport Manager at London Heliport



London Heliport UTM ready zone



About Altitude Angel

Altitude Angel is an award-winning provider of UTM (Unified Traffic Management) software, enabling those planning to operate, or develop UTM/U-Space solutions, to quickly integrate robust data and services with minimum effort.

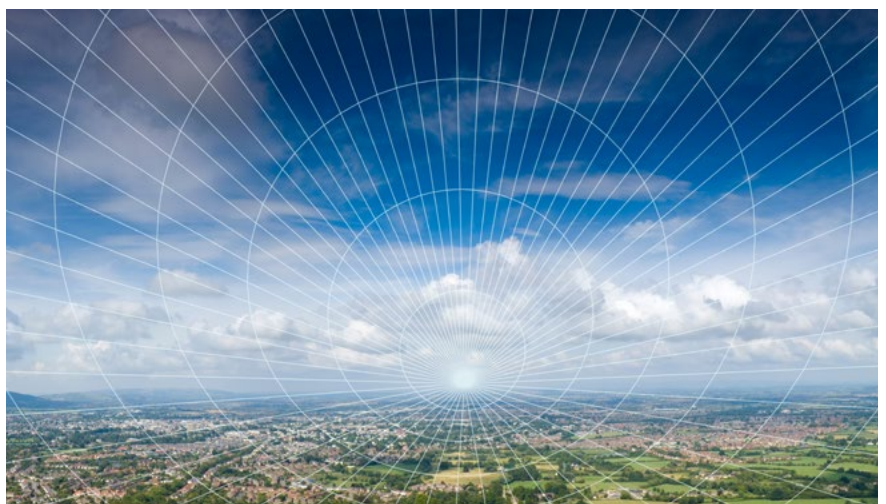
Today, Altitude Angel's market-defining technology is providing a critical, enabling service on which the future of UTM will be built across the globe. Altitude Angel is leading a consortium of businesses to build and develop 165 miles (265km) of 'drone superhighways' connecting airspace above Reading, Oxford, Milton Keynes, Cambridge, Coventry, and Rugby over the next two years. The Skyway superhighway network, enabled using Altitude Angel's patented ARROW technology, will unlock the huge potential offered by unmanned aerial vehicles and be a catalyst to enable growth in the urban air mobility industry.

Altitude Angel's first party solutions also power some of the world's leading ANSPs, aviation authorities and enterprises, including LVNL (Netherlands) and Avinor (Norway), empowering them with new capabilities to safely manage and integrate drone traffic into national operations.

By unlocking the potential of drones and helping national aviation authorities, ANSPs, developers and enterprise organisations, Altitude Angel is establishing new services to support the growth in the drone industry.

Altitude Angel was founded by Richard Parker in 2014 and is headquartered in Reading, UK.

Altitude Angel's developer platform is open and available to all at <https://developers.altitudeangel.com>.



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